

Listing of the Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of automatically performing liquid microextraction analysis on a plurality of samples in separate vials comprising the steps of:
 - controlling movement of a syringe in multiple axes;
 - cleaning the syringe;
 - drawing a carrier ~~liquid~~ solvent into the syringe;
 - moving the syringe to a sample vial;
 - inserting a tip of the syringe into the vial;
 - collecting a portion of the sample in the syringe;
 - withdrawing the syringe from the sample vial;
 - moving the syringe to an instrument injector;
 - injecting the sample into the instrument injector for analysis of the sample; and
 - repeating the prior steps on each of the plurality of samples.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the step of collecting the sample comprises the steps of:
 - activating a syringe plunger to expel and hold a microdrop of the solvent on the tip of the syringe;
 - holding the microdrop on the tip of the syringe in the sample vial for a period of time to collect the sample; and
 - drawing the microdrop and the collected portion of the sample into the syringe.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of:
 - placing a plurality of sample vials in a holder in established coordinate positions.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of:
 - providing a syringe cleaning solution in a known coordinate position.

5. (Original) The method of claim 4 wherein the step of cleaning the syringe comprises the steps of:

moving the syringe to the cleaning vial and withdrawing contents of the cleaning solution into the syringe; and

expelling the cleaning solution from the syringe into a waste receptacle.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the step of inserting the syringe into the sample vial further comprises the step of:

inserting the syringe into the sample vial to position the tip of the syringe in a head space above a liquid sample in the vial.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the step of inserting the syringe into the sample vial further comprises the step of:

inserting the tip of the syringe into the liquid sample in the sample vial.

8. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for automatically performing liquid microextraction analysis of a plurality of samples in separate vials, the apparatus comprising:

means for controlling movement of a syringe in multiple axes;

means for cleaning the syringe;

means for drawing a carrier ~~liquid~~ solvent into the syringe;

means for moving the syringe to a sample vial;

means for inserting a tip of the syringe into the vial;

means for collecting a portion of the sample in the syringe;

means for withdrawing the syringe from the sample vial;

means for moving the syringe to an instrument injector;

means for injecting the sample into the instrument injector for analysis of the sample.

In the Drawings:

The attached drawing sheets reflect the changes to Figure 1. The sheets replace the original drawings sheets. In Figure 1, the reference number 14 has been added to the figure, directed to the autosampler, consistent with the specification.